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Defense Department and CIA Draw Fulbright's Criticism

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WASHINGTON — Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright, who's been sniping at the Johnson administration's foreign policy, turned his influential guns Sunday on two other federal powerhouses — the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department.

The Arkansas Democrat said that he and many others thought both agencies were playing too "prominent" a role in the conduct of American foreign policy.

The CIA, Fulbright continued, in a radio-TV interview, is "supposed to be an intelligence agency only, and not an operating agency in the execution of foreign policy."

As for the military, he said, the American tradition is that it should be "subject to civilian policy-makers."

Asked whether he thought the CIA and the Defense Department "have a decisive influence" in determining U.S. policy in Viet Nam, Fulbright said he thought the role of both was "very great."

"I would prefer that the civilian agencies be the major and decisive influence," the senator said. "I think it (the Viet Nam situation) is largely a political decision . . ." He predicted that only political and social settlements "will finally bring about some stability in that area."

Fulbright was asked whether he thought "an imbalance" had developed between the State and Defense Departments, in the latter's favor, in foreign policy matters.

"I think this has been developing," he replied.

He pointed out that the Defense Department receives more than 50 per cent of the whole federal budget. In addition, he said, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara "is an extremely able man, with great persuasive powers. It is a combination of these elements."

He then was asked whether he thought "the State Department has been very willing to let Defense make . . . policies which are really political policies."

"Well," he replied, "I don't know whether they (the State Department) have been willing or not, but it seems to me the Defense Department is ex-

tremely influential.

"I feel this very much as a legislator and as a senator, when I see the way the Congress responds to the Defense Department in every respect. I mean the way they never subject their major enormous appropriations bills to any serious discussion. We take it on faith."

Because of the Pentagon's "tremendous power," Fulbright said, President Johnson and the nation must watch it carefully to make sure it does not become "a dominant one" in government.